

I have not been back, except for a brief visit, for a couple of months.

-L. R. M. HUNTER, Government School, Main Camp, Lakewood.

Two Unusually Large Clutches of Blue-billed Duck's Eggs.—

As the Blue-billed Duck (*Oxyura australis*) seldom lays a clutch of more than 5 or 6 eggs, it is interesting to report nests containing 9 and 10 eggs respectively, at Butler's Swamp, Claremont.

The first nest, which contained 10 eggs, was found on October 24, 1948. The nest was deep cup shape in form and was constructed entirely of reeds. It was attached to the reeds in about three feet of water. The nest was totally unlined with the exception of three breast feathers. The birds had constructed a canopy of reeds over the nest.

Nine of the ten eggs were nest-stained and were a dirty-white colour, rough and not glossy. The non-stained egg, which had been just laid, was light blue in colour. One typical egg measured 67.7 by 50 mm. During the day the birds had visited the nest several times and had rearranged the position of the eggs. Several times I disturbed the duck on the nest, and the bird dived off and swam away under water. Unfortunately the nest did not last long, for two weeks later when I next visited the nest the eggs were smashed and the nest destroyed.

The second nest was found on November 21, 1948. This contained nine eggs. However, of these nine eggs eight of them were Blue-billed Duck's eggs and the ninth was that of another species. It was smaller in size (57 by 40 mm.), greasy and with a decided gloss and creamy in colour; it had evidently been laid by a Black Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*). On the next visit to the swamp it was found that the Black Duck's egg and a Blue-billed Duck's egg had been taken, probably by one of the many schoolboy egg collectors who visit the swamp. But on a third visit to this nest on November 25, I found that the Blue-billed Duck had laid another two eggs to make nine altogether.

This nest was also unlined and like the other one it was constructed entirely of reeds. It was built under a clump of overhanging reeds and was very rough in structure. This nest was about 100 yards from the former nest and was possibly built by the same bird after its first nest was destroyed.

Ten is the largest number of eggs recorded for the Blue-billed Duck, but the cases I have reported may quite well have been combination clutches.

—M. J. SEYFORTH, Claremont.

CORRECTION

In No. 6, September 13, 1948, p. 117, line 32, for "weeks" read "days."